

The Amicus Disability Services nonprofit public benefit corporation, which has a specialization in serving individuals with communication disabilities of hearing, speech and/or vision, strongly supports FCC Compliance with Section 225 of the Telecommunications Act, and requests EXTENSIVE funding to be given to the Speech-to-Speech advocacy and educational services nonprofit public benefit organization -- Speech Communications Assistance by Telephone, Inc. -- whose founder and president, Bob Segalman, Ph.D., established the Nationwide STS Relay system. Dr. Segalman and his Board are the acknowledged experts in educating persons with Speech Disabilities of all types -- both physical disorders of the vocal system, as well as neurological disorders of the human Speech Center in the left cerebral hemisphere, and other neurological causes of speech disability -- to learn and use the Nationwide STS Relay system established for their benefit by the FCC. There is no other organization in the United States with as much expertise, knowledge and experience as this organization, and no one better qualified to provide public education than the founder of the STS Relay, Dr. Bob Segalman.

As an individual who holds National Board Certifications at the Diplomate (highest) level in both Professional Disability Consulting, and Professional Disability Analysis, and as a person who has run an organization specifically for individuals with speech disabilities since 1984, the FCC must understand that there are many persons with speech disabilities who have not received education or information about STS Relay, and many nondisabled individuals still do not know how to use the STS Relay to communicate with person with speech disabilities. Our agency has been doing its best, without any funding at all, to communicate this information. But Dr. Segalman is in even a worse position, since he is the acknowledged expert, with hundreds of inquiries and requests for information, and no funding at all from the FCC or any other agency or entity.

Persons with speech disabilities are at extreme risk for the violation and denial of their Constitutional rights to Freedom of Speech when they are restricted from using the public telephone system due to lack of proper information and education. The deprivation of this most fundamental legal right is caused by the simple fact that Dr. Segalman and his organization, have not been supported or funded by the FCC, which should not be happening.

Today, as of February, 2007, new Neuroscience research has confirmed that MOST, the VAST MAJORITY, of persons who were early-deafened (particularly before age 3), do have normal vocal systems, but they also have SIGNIFICANT lack of "white matter" (brain neural connections) to their left-hemisphere SPEECH Center from their left-hemisphere Auditory Center. This means that ALL such persons, formerly known as "deaf-mutes" who were trained to use their voices, and who WISH TO use their voices, but who have "unclear" speech, are being forced into using "ASL Relay" services AND THEY ARE BEING ILLEGALLY SILENCED by the failure of the FCC to ensure that they, too can learn about, and use, the STS Relay system. The FCC could save a great deal of public taxpayer funds, and save a great deal of staff time and energy, if this large group of "oral" early-deafened individuals are able to learn about, and use, the STS Relay Services. But, as of now, these persons have had no knowledge of STS Relay, and they are being illegally SILENCED and have lost their own Constitutional rights to Freedom of Speech. Again, by funding Dr. Segalman and his organization, this

would not be a problem.

The FCC has far more to do in one agency, with all of the various branches and services the FCC provides to the public. The FCC needs to "outsource" the education, planning and training for the public and the STS Communication Assistants to the one person and the one organization that established STS Relay -- the true experts -- Dr. Bob Segalman and the organization he has established for providing this education and public service to the general public.

We, and all of the persons with speech disabilities, hearing/speech disabilities, hearing/speech/vision disabilities, and combinations thereof, of whatever type or cause, stand firmly for the position that all citizens and residents in the United States with speech disabilities must have the full rights to Freedom of Speech -- to use their own voices and to speak in their own words, whenever possible.

This is NOT possible by the FCC funding "ASL Video Relay," since ASL Interpreters CANNOT understand "unclear speech" auditorily -- they are only trained to look at "signs" -- they are not even trained to lipread any speech-disabled person. By funding those "ASL Video Relay" providers, the FCC is EFFECTIVELY SILENCING an entire group of persons with speech disabilities.

It is time for ALL persons with speech disabilities -- those who are the most isolated, excluded, ignored and discriminated against individuals in American society -- to have their own organization funded EXTENSIVELY by the FCC, so all of these persons with speech disabilities will have the knowledge, education and opportunity to utilize, if at all possible, their legal and Constitutional rights to full Freedom of SPEECH.

All of you who read this message would feel the same, if you were suddenly deprived of the ability to speak entirely clearly. You would be ostracized immediately, even by your co-workers and family members. You would not be able to perform your job functions. You would be entirely devastated. And, because of the current lack of information and education, you probably would not know of the existence of STS Relay Services that might enable you to continue to speak to the world, in your own voice, and in your own words, through the public telephone system.

Please adhere to Section 225 of the Telecommunications Act, and provide EXTENSIVE funding to the one individual -- Dr. Bob Segalman -- and the only nonprofit public benefit corporation in the USA -- Speech Communication Assistance by Telephone, Inc. -- who and which CAN provide the Constitutional rights of Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Association to persons, throughout the USA, with speech disabilities.

Thank you.

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